



Los Alamos National Laboratory sponsors 17th annual Hazmat Challenge

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Competition tests skills of hazardous materials response teams from three states

Editor's Note: News media representatives interested in attending the Hazmat Challenge can contact the Laboratory's Communications Office at 505-667-7000 to coordinate travel to the site.

LOS ALAMOS, N.M., July 23, 2013—Twelve hazardous materials response teams from New Mexico, Missouri and Oklahoma will test their skills at the 17th annual Hazmat Challenge July 30 through Aug. 2 at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

“The challenge provides hazardous materials responders the opportunity to test their skills, network with other response agencies, and learn new techniques through realistic hazardous materials release scenarios in a safe, non-hazardous environment,” said Chris Rittner of the Laboratory’s Emergency Operations Division.

Held at Los Alamos’ Technical Area 49, the event requires participants to respond to simulated hazardous materials emergencies involving a rail car, a clandestine laboratory, various modes of transportation, industrial piping scenarios, a simulated radiological release and a confined space event. The finale of the Hazmat Challenge is a skills-based obstacle course; teams are graded and earn points based on their ability to perform response skills through a 10-station obstacle course while using fully encapsulating personal protective equipment.

The Laboratory began the Hazmat Challenge in 1996 as a way to hone the skills of its own hazmat team members. The event now offers a training opportunity in a competitive format that is open to all hazardous materials response teams in New Mexico and across the nation. The winning team receives a “travelling trophy” and top scoring teams in the technical and overall categories are awarded permanent trophies. Funding for New Mexico teams is provided through federal grants via the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NMDHSEM).

A video about the 2008 and 2012 Hazmat challenges is on the Laboratory’s Web site and on the [Lab's YouTube channel](#).

For more information on this year’s challenge, contact Chris Rittner at crittner@lanl.gov or Carmela Rodriguez at carmela@lanl.gov by email.

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